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An European Pselaphid Beetle Collected in New York

Orlando Park¹

Some years ago the author purchased the pselaphid beetle collection of the late Charles F. A. Schaeffer (Park, 1947, p. 65). In this collection there was an unidentified specimen that later study demonstrated to be a female of the European *Trichonyx sulcicollis* (Reichenbach), 1816, p. 62. This specimen was collected under bark with ants on June 13, 1931 by K. W. Cooper at Flushing, Queens, New York.

Since no species of pselaphid has been known to inhabit both Europe and the United States, the reader may well imagine with what care this New York insect was identified, and the determination checked and rechecked over the past several years.

Trichonyx sulcicollis is a very large, very distinctive species. It is quite unlike anything in the pselaphid fauna of the Western Hemisphere. It is well known abroad, and its external anatomy has been discussed recently and the aedeagus figured by Jeannel (1950, p. 159, fig. 62).

Several attempts have been made by the author to discriminate this Flushing specimen from typical series of this European species in his collection. This material includes a specimen from eastern Europe identified by Edmund Reitter, and a series from New Forest, Hampshire, England collected and identified by David Sharp. These attempts have not met with success. Unfortunately, the sex of the Flushing specimen precluded what might have been a critical comparison of the aedeagus with European material. In addition the author examined *sulcicollis* in the collections of the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, in May, 1951.

In the next place, it is possible that the Flushing locality data are incorrect, and that the specimen is an European pselaphid with the wrong locality information.

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All available evidence suggests that the locality data are authentic. The specimen under discussion is not mounted on a small oblong card, so commonly found in pselaphid collections of England, France and Germany. Instead, it is mounted on the crimped triangular point-mount in the manner commonly found in collections in the United States. In addition, the pin bears six items: the point-mounted beetle, three point-mounted workers of *Lasius*², locality label, and habitat label. All six items showed no disturbance, remounting, or evidence of repinning.

Finally, it is possible that the locality data are correct, but that *sulcicollis* has been introduced by man into the Queens area.

The species could have been introduced in soil, leaf mold or moss packed about the roots of shrubs or bulbs.' It is strange that *sulcicollis* has not been reported from New York if a breeding population has been established for at least twenty years. New York is a relatively well-worked state, with 81 species of pselaphids known within its borders. Patently, further field work in the Flushing area is very desirable.

Of special interest are the ecological data. The habitat of the Flushing specimen is right for this species. Reitter (1909, p. 210) states that *sulcicollis* is found in Germany in old trees and tree stumps that harbor colonies of ants (*Lasius brunneus* and *Ponera coarctata*). Donisthorpe (1927, p. 41) states that *sulcicollis* has been taken in England in old tree stumps, and in an old beech tree in New Forest, among other habitats, and that it can be collected in the evening by sweeping. Donisthorpe also cites Douglas and Scott as having taken *sulcicollis* in numbers under bark of elm stumps with ants, and thinks that there is little doubt but that these ants were *Lasius brunneus*. Donisthorpe also gives two records of *sulcicollis* on the Continent, namely, Bedel taking the species with *Ponera coarctata* near Paris, and Wasmann taking the species near Valkenburg, Netherlands in nests of *Acanthomyops fuliginosa*. In this last record, the circumstances suggested that the tree had been inhabited pre-

² Mr. Edward O. Wilson, of Harvard University, very kindly identified these ants as *Lasius umbratus* (Nylander).

³In a personal communication, the original collector, Professor Kenneth Cooper, of Princeton University, states that the Flushing area has had a history of exotic beetles being collected in its environs (cf. Cooper, 1930, 1932), and further, "I have always thought the explanation to lie in the large importations of nursery stock that used to be made there. The old Bloodgood nursery being, I was always told, the first or one of the first in the New World, and dating back to the 18th Century." This is a very reasonable view, and may explain the presence of *sulcicollis* at Flushing. Dr. Cooper remembers collecting a large pselaphid with ants under moist bark of a rotten oak log, at a wooded swamp edge along an old railroad near Kissena Lake. It could have been this same specimen, or, of course, something very different but it appears to be a good lead for further collecting.

viously by *Lasius brunneus*. Jeannel (*loc. cit.*) reviews the situation, and adds a record by Brunier having taken *sulcicollis* regularly with *Lasius* near Noyon, Oise, France.

In conclusion, weighing the available information, it is the opinion of the writer that *Trichonyx sulcicollis* (Reichenbach) has been introduced by man into the Flushing, New York area within the last two hundred years, and has become established in native log mold and possibly associated with the American ants of the genus *Lasius*.

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